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UNCLAS YEREVAN 001298

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN, EUR/ACE, EUR/PGI, DRL  
DEPT PLEASE PASS MCC AND USAID

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR INAUGURATES FIRST COMMUNITY SELF-HELP FUND SITE

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PROJECT ENERGIZES LOCAL INVOLVEMENT  
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**¶11.** (U) Ambassador Ordway, accompanied by regional GOAM representatives and local press, inaugurated the newly completed Noyemberyan Sport School facility June 2 in Armenia's northeastern Tavush region. The ceremony marked the completion of the first project sponsored by the USG's "Community Self-Help Fund" (CSHF) initiative in Armenia. A grant of USD 10,500 was used to leverage funding from the GOAM and a municipal relief organization in Greece to refurbish the complex, purchase safe recreational equipment from reputable suppliers, repair an unsafe fence and lighting in the park area adjacent to the school and renovate the area for public use. Media coverage of the event noted the project's early and under-budget completion and echoed Ambassador Ordway's call for increased private-public collaboration at the local level to improve living standards in Armenia's rural areas. Local leaders praised the effort as a way to mobilize local architectural and construction talent that had been underutilized in this border town since the outbreak of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

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COMMUNITY SELF-HELP FUND FOSTERS LOCAL COOPERATION  
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**¶12.** (U) The sport school was one of the ten successful applicants who were awarded small grants during the first tranche of funding from the CSHF project. The CSHF program awards communities who successfully mobilize local resources through proven and effective NGO mechanisms to offer a significant portion of capital needed for local infrastructure projects that address urgent community needs. As part of the program, NGOs must work with local businesses and municipal authorities to ensure that program activities will not be blocked and that they will receive support from appropriate civic entities upon completion. Sustainability was a key factor in granting funds for the CSHF projects. In the case of the Noyemberyan Sports School, the local NGO identified a market for clean, affordable lodging in the region (there are no hotels in a 40 mile radius) and refurbished part of the complex to serve as a hotel facility. An overwhelming 250 eligible applications competed for the first round of CSHF funding.

**¶13.** (U) The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is managing the project through the local offices of Save the Children. Post will continue to refine the program as a complementary arm of ongoing USG technical assistance for NGOs and government strengthening at the local level. A second call for proposals is expected by June 31.

ORDWAY